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5/26/76

VV - ESA 810000 5/26/76
 RR RUE SBA 1882 1471920 76 MAY 27 AM 8 22
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 R 261900Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
 TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1333
 INFO RUE SBA/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 5079
 BT
 MONTEVIDEO 1882

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E.O. 11652: GDS
 TAGS: SHUM, PINT, PINS, UY
 SUBJ: MICHELINI AND GUTIERREZ BURIED IN MONTEVIDEO

REF: BUENOS AIRES 3465

1. ZELMAR MICHELINI WAS BURIED AT APPROXIMATELY 8:30 A.M. MAY 25 IN MONTEVIDEO'S CENTRAL CEMETERY. SOME 3000 PERSONS ATTENDED SERVICES. DESPITE SOME COMPLAINTS ABOUT AUTHORITIES' RESTRICTIONS (CROWD CONTROL, NOT PERMITTING LIST 15 LEADER JORGE BATILE TO DELIVER EULOGY) FUNERAL CONDUCTED WITHOUT MAJOR INCIDENT.

2. HECTOR GUTIERREZ RUIZ WAS PUT TO REST IN MONTEVIDEO'S BUCEO CEMETERY AT ROUGHLY THE SAME TIME. SOME 1000, INCLUDING MEMBERS AND LEADERS OF BLANCO PARTY TURNED OUT. WHILE THERE WERE NO SECURITY INCIDENTS, THERE WERE SOME ARRESTS, INCLUDING BLANCO PARTY PRESIDENT MURDOCH AND FORMER SENATOR MARIO HEBER AND HIS WIFE. A PARTY SOURCE CLAIMED THAT MURDOCH AND HEBER HAD BEEN ARRESTED FOR HAVING PUT A PARTY NOTE OF CONDOLENCE IN THE PRESS. AURELIO TERRA, PRO-SECRETARY OF THE PRESIDENCY, ATTENDED THE SERVICE FOR GUTIERREZ AND THEN EITHER RESIGNED OR WAS FIRED. WE HAVE YET TO CONFIRM WHICH. FINALLY, A MEMBER OF THE PARTY DIRECTORATE TOLD AN EMBOFF LATE MAY 25 THAT THE GUTIERREZ FAMILY HAD RECEIVED CALLS OF CONDOLENCE FROM SENATOR KENNEDY AND FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE OF THE VATICAN.

3. COMMENT: URUGUAYAN AUTHORITIES FACED SOMETHING OF A DILEMMA IN HANDLING THESE FUNERALS. ON THE ONE HAND, THEY BELIEVED IT NECESSARY FOR COMPASSIONATE AND OTHER REASONS TO PERMIT BURIALS ON THEIR OWN SOIL FOR GUTIERREZ AND MICHELINI. ON THE OTHER HAND, THEY DID NOT WISH TO HAVE THESE EXILED FORMER LEADERS EULOGIZED FOR POLITICAL REASONS OR TO HAVE THE EMOTIONAL SITUATION AND GENUINE GRIEF OF MOURNERS EXPLOITED BY AGITATORS IN A WAY WHICH COULD PRODUCE FURTHER INCIDENTS AND EVEN CASUALTIES. THEY WERE SUCCESSFUL, BUT AT THE COST OF FURTHER EMBITTERING BLANCO PARTY LEADERS AND PROBABLY SOME OTHER FRIENDS OF GUTIERREZ AND MICHELINI WHO KNEW THEM IN DIFFERENT TIMES, AND ALSO AT THE COST PERHAPS OF PRODUCING AN IMAGE OF INSENSITIVIT

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ☐ In Part ☒ In Full

☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to

Date _____ Declassify on _____

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127 FURTHER DAMAGING THEIR REPUTATION ABROAD. PRESUMABLY THESE RISKS WERE CONSIDERED AND THE DETERMINATION MADE THAT POSSIBLE VIOLENCE AT THE GRAVE SITES WOULD HAVE BEEN WORSE.

4. WIRELESS FILE FOR MAY 24 CARRIED STATEMENT BY CONGRESSMAN KOCH IN WHICH HE LINKS GOU TO DEATHS OF MICHELINI AND GUTIERREZ IN BUENOS AIRES. DEPARTMENT SHOULD BEAR IN MIND THAT TO OUR KNOWLEDGE THESE TWO, PLUS OTHER PROMINENT URUGUAYAN POLITICIANS IN BUENOS AIRES AND ELSEWHERE, HAVE LIVED WITHOUT BEING MOLESTED BY GOU, APART FROM OUTSTANDING DETENTION ORDERS AGAINST GUTIERREZ AND SOME OTHERS FOR SUBVERSIVE ASSOCIATION SHOULD THEY RETURN TO URUGUAY. WE SEE NO REASON UNDER PRESENT POLITICAL CLIMATE HERE FOR GOU, WHICH FEELS NO PARTICULAR INSECURITY, TO HAVE SUDDENLY TAKEN DIFFERENT ATTITUDE TOWARDS THESE PERSONS, AND WE HAVE NO INFORMATION INDICATING THIS IS THE CASE. IN THE ABSENCE OF SUCH INFORMATION, WE HOPE THE DEPARTMENT WILL TREAT THE MATTER JUDICIOUSLY TO THE END THAT CONGRESSMEN AND OTHERS WILL NOT UNFAIRLY AND ON SPECULATIVE BASIS ONLY REACH CONCLUSIONS FOR WHICH THERE IS NO PRESENT JUSTIFICATION. SIRACUSA

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